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## CORRESPONDENCE.

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### LETTER FROM GREECE.\*

**TIRYNS AND MYKENAI.**—The correspondent of the London *Times*, Mr. W. J. Stillman, published in *The Nation*, No. 1250, a letter from Athens, in which he discusses at some length the ancient structures of Tiryns and Mykenai, and sets forth his new theories on prehistoric chronology. These latter theories need not be discussed here; but I deem it my duty to set in their true light those of his views which refer specifically to the architecture of Mykenai and Tiryns, and to show that his assertions are in many cases erroneous. As I myself directed a part of the excavations at those places, and have carefully studied them all and drew the plans of them, I cannot allow the actual facts to be obscured and erroneous statements about the ruins to be made.

Mr. Stillman remarks first upon the largest bee-hive tomb at Mykenai, known as the "Treasury of Atreus." He admits that this monument belongs to the heroic age and that it had, even at that early period, an architecturally well-developed façade with two pilasters, to the left and right of the door. But the famous, richly decorated pilasters which were found at the entrance he supposes not to have formed the original façade, but to be part of a restoration, undertaken perhaps in the seventh century B. C. Mr. Stillman believes that such a restoration must be assumed, first, because the bases, which are still in place, are so little corroded, and, secondly, because on the two pilasters and on the entire façade traces of stone-sawing can be recognized in many places.

Now, what is to be said of these reasons? In the first place, it is, of course, wholly impossible to infer from the degree of corrosion whether a stone belongs to the seventh century B. C. or is a few centuries older. If, after twenty-five centuries, a stone still looks as fresh as if it had been cut only a few days ago, clearly it may just as well be three thousand years old. The reason for the slight corrosion lies simply in the fact, that these two bases were very early buried below the surface, and accordingly were

\* The following letter of Dr. Dörpfeld was translated from the German and sent to us by Professor Goodell of Yale University. Dr. D. had intended it for publication in the *Nation*. We would have liked, for the better understanding of the questions in dispute, to reprint from the *Nation* those portions of Mr. Stillman's letter which are referred to by Dr. Dörpfeld, but our space will not permit, and we must refer the reader to the *Nation* of June 13, 1889.—ED.

not exposed to the destructive influence of the weather. Secondly, as to the numerous traces of stone-sawing which the façade of the bee-hive tomb exhibits, Mr. Stillman has often adverted to these as unmistakable evidence that the façade could not have been built before the seventh century B. C. For he believes that the stone-saw was not invented till about 600 B. C., and accordingly he regards all buildings on which traces of the stone-saw are visible as later than the seventh century. This, in fact, is the chief reason why Mr. Stillman is unwilling to recognize the great antiquity of the buildings of Tiryns and Mykenai. But how does he know that the stone-saw was unknown and therefore not in use before the seventh century? He has misunderstood a statement of Pausanias about the invention of roof-tiles sawn out of marble. This author says, in describing the temple of Zeus at Olympia (v. 10.3), that the temple was covered, not with ordinary tiles, but with tiles of marble, and adds the following remark about the inventor of these tiles: "The invention is said to be due to a Naxian, Byzes, artist of the statues in Naxos which bear the inscription,

Νάξιος Εὐεργός με γένει Δητοῦς πόρε, Βύζεω  
παῖς δὲ πρότιςτος τεύξε λίθου κέραμον.

As to date, this Byzes was a contemporary of Alyattes the Lydian and Astyages, son of Kyaxares, king of the Medes." From this statement, we learn that the Naxian Byzes, or more probably his son Euergos, was the first to make roof-tiles of marble by means of the saw, and that this occurred about 600 B. C. That is, before this time there were only roof-tiles of burnt clay, which were made with curved surfaces (thus:  $\smile$ ), exactly as the roof-tiles are to-day universally made in Greece. Euergos was the first to invent tiles with flat surfaces, which he could make from marble with the saw. It was not the *invention* of the stone-saw, then, which was attributed to Euergos, for this was a very ancient tool, already well known to the Babylonians and Egyptians, but the *employment* of the stone-saw in the preparation of marble tiles. Such tiles sawn out of marble and also older curved marble tiles, which were made without the saw, have been found during the most recent excavations on the Akropolis at Athens, among the ruins of the buildings destroyed by the Persians. Mr. Stillman is then mistaken when he places the invention of the stone-saw in the seventh or sixth century, and is therefore wholly incorrect when he regards buildings that show traces of stone-sawing as later than the year 600 B. C. Moreover, he might have convinced himself of his error if he had observed somewhat more accurately the very building which he himself now ascribes to the heroic age, viz., the palace of Mykenai. For the thresholds here show just as clearly the traces of

the stone-saw as the thresholds, antae, and jambs in Tiryns, as the Lion Gate and the bee-hive tomb in Mykenai, and the bee-hive tomb in Orchomenos. We may even look upon the frequent occurrence of traces of the stone-saw as strong evidence that we have to do with a structure of the heroic period, that is, with one older than the seventh century. It is true, in the fifth century, and even later, stones were sometimes sawn, but less frequently, because they had other and better tools. In the heroic age, when the chisel was not known, only the pointed pick and the stone-saw were used for cutting stone. Both these tools were also used on the façade of the large bee-hive tomb at Mykenai, and Mr. Stillman is, therefore, mistaken when he assumes a restoration of this tomb in the seventh or sixth century.

Secondly, Mr. Stillman goes on to discuss the royal palace on the summit of the citadel of Mykenai, which was recently excavated by Mr. Tsountas, and the plan of which was drawn by me after careful investigation. It gave me pleasure to see that Mr. Stillman ascribes this palace to the heroic age, though the walls consist for the most part of rubble and clay.<sup>1</sup> Formerly, such walls were, in his opinion, a certain indication of late, perhaps Byzantine, origin. Although Mr. Stillman does not himself openly acknowledge his former error, still all archæologists will be glad of his tacit admission. But, if Mr. Stillman acknowledges now that the building discovered at Mykenai is a Homeric royal palace, then one can easily prove, on the spot, that the walls of Tiryns are built of precisely the same material and in precisely the same way, and, therefore, that they must be assigned to the same time.

Above the palace at Mykenai were found some wretched huts, and still above these the foundations of a Greek building which I have explained as a temple of the sixth or fifth century B. C. Now, Mr. Stillman asserts that these foundations neither belonged to a temple nor are as old as I have said. On archæological questions Mr. Stillman often has peculiar views, which he firmly maintains against all comers. For instance, he believes, and has, in conversation with myself and others, defended his belief, that the very ancient Pelasgic wall back of the Athenian Propylæia, the well-known boundary-wall of the precinct of Artemis Brauronia, belongs to the time of — Hadrian! As it is unnecessary to discuss such an opinion, so I might also set aside Mr. Stillman's ideas with regard to the Mykenaiian temple. Still, considering the great importance which the question of the age and form of this temple has for the history of the

<sup>1</sup> [Of the "beautifully polished blocks of stone" and "marble floors" mentioned by Mr. Stillman there is not a trace. That this is so, is obvious to any observer on the spot, and is distinctly implied by the detailed statements of Mr. Tsountas in his account in the *Πρακτικά* for 1886, p. 72.—The TRANSLATOR.]

architecture of the early period, I will briefly give the reasons which go to prove that the foundations discovered upon the summit of the citadel of Mykenai belong to a temple of archaic times. In the first place, the ground-plan of these foundations is not a simple parallelogram, as Mr. Stillman asserts, but the foundation of the cella is plainly distinguishable from that of the outer row of columns. The building was, then, a peripteros, and, judging by its entire form, a peripteral temple with six columns on each end. Then, again, the rudeness of the walls cannot be cited as proof that they do not belong to a temple, for the construction of the lower foundations of the Hera temple and of the treasure-houses at Olympia or of the old Dionysos temple in Athens are not a whit better. Further, the statement of Mr. Tsountas (*Πρακτικά* for 1886, p. 61), that only a single block of the cornice has been found, is erroneous: two such blocks of archaic form are still to be seen near the temple, and a third at a little distance from it. Besides these, many early Greek roof-tiles are still lying near the temple. Formerly, as the watchman and overseer of Mykenai has told me, drums of columns, also, were strewn about near the foundations. Further, on the slope of the hill, near the watchman's house above the Lion Gate, I have myself seen one capital of a column and one triglyph-block, which are now in the museum at Charvati, and which, like the portions of the cornice, are of poros stone. An architrave-block of the same material, belonging with these, is still lying within the citadel. Since, now, all these architectural members, judging from their form, belong to the sixth or the beginning of the fifth century B. C., we are entirely justified in recognizing in the foundations upon the top of the citadel the remains of a temple of the sixth or fifth century. It is true that, near the temple, roof-tiles of Roman times have also been found, and an inscription of the second century B. C.; but these discoveries only show that the temple was repaired in Roman times. Or shall we, from the circumstance that a great many roof-tiles with Roman stamps were found in the temple of Zeus at Olympia, draw the conclusion that this temple was not built in the fifth century, but by the Romans? If the Argives, at the capture of Mykenai in the fifth century, found the temple completed and destroyed it, then it was certainly reconstructed. But Mr. Stillman assumes that the Argives, when they captured the citadel, found neither the temple nor the huts lying beneath, but the royal palace which lies under the latter. That this supposition is impossible, is proven, on the one hand, by the wall-paintings, which were found, partly still on the walls and partly in small pieces lying about on the ground. These remnants exhibit ornaments which no longer occur in Greek and archaic times, but which are especially characteristic of the heroic age. On the other hand, all the objects, particularly the fragments of pottery, which were found

in the ruins of the palace belong without exception to heroic times, and not to the fifth century. Evidently, Mr. Stillman is unacquainted with these objects; otherwise it would have been impossible for him to place the destruction of the palace in the fifth century. Furthermore, it may be distinctly stated, that Mr. Tsountas, to whose authority Mr. Stillman appeals, is in doubt only as to whether the uppermost structure is a temple or not. That it is an early Greek building, and therefore that the palace had been for some centuries destroyed and buried in rubbish when the Argives, in the fifth century, captured Mykenai—on these points Mr. Tsountas entertains, he informs me, no doubt whatever. And this is, of course, the essential thing. For whether the uppermost structure is a temple or a building of another sort is of little consequence for determining the age of the palace. But the proofs that it actually was a temple I have given above.

Toward the close of his article, Mr. Stillman speaks again of Tiryns, and asserts that he found in the walls of the palace "well-burned brick laid in mortar," and that "the Byzantine character of the ruin has always been admitted by the principal Greek archæological authorities." The latter assertion is simply not correct, for Mr. Philios and Mr. Tsountas, whom Mr. Stillman probably means by his "authorities," agree with me that the palace itself dates from the heroic age, and that the church above it is Byzantine. The latter is in fact indicated as such in the plan of Tiryns drawn by me. But burned brick and mortar are not to be found in the walls. These are wholly of unburned brick with clay for mortar, but in some places the heat was so intense, when the citadel was destroyed, that the brick as well as the clay were burned red and some parts were even vitrified. Such a wall, as Mr. Tsountas told me, was actually taken by Mr. Stillman for a wall of burnt brick laid in mortar. I can only recommend him simply to examine the other end of the wall; he will then recognize that the brick there as well as the mortar are still wholly unburnt. Only that end of the wall is burnt which was next to the stout wooden beams of the door.

When, a few years ago, Mr. Stillman asserted that the palace at Tiryns belonged to Byzantine times, he appealed to the authority of the celebrated English architect Penrose, who had been visiting Tiryns with him. Being persuaded that such an opinion could be due only to insufficient acquaintance with the ruins, I publicly invited Mr. Penrose and Mr. Stillman to go with me to Tiryns, that I might show them the buildings and point out on the spot the proofs of their great antiquity. Mr. Penrose accepted this invitation. He went with me to Tiryns and Mykenai, was convinced of the great antiquity of the structures there, and then without hesitation, in a letter published in the London *Academy*, he openly and honorably

acknowledged his former mistake. Mr. Stillman, on the other hand, did not accept my invitation, although, last spring here in Athens, I again offered by word of mouth to accompany him thither. In May, however, without letting me know of it, he went to Tiryns and Mykenai with two Greek gentlemen, and, now that Mr. Penrose has deserted him, he appeals to these authorities. Accordingly, I can do nothing else than hereby to offer once more to Mr. Stillman to accompany him at any time to Tiryns and study the ruins with him. If he declines, then the weakness of his arguments must be evident, even to himself.

*Athens,*  
September 24, 1889.

Dr. WILHELM DÖRPFELD,  
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